

could we. We are saying very clearly, however, that if you promised an employee a certain pension, pay that employee the pension you promised.

Our bill would guarantee the right of employees who are 40 years old or older, or who have worked for ten or more years for the same company, to choose to stay in the traditional defined benefit pension plan even if the company decides to convert that plan to a cash balance plan.

When Treasury Secretary Snow visited with Senators DURBIN and HARKIN this past January prior to his confirmation, he told them that he believed in choice. He told them that his railroad company, CSX, offered choice. He said a board he sat on, Verizon, offered choice.

But now he is overseeing a pending change to pension regulations at the Department of Treasury that would not require companies to offer choice. Under the pending rules, a well-meaning company would be allowed to offer choice or otherwise treat their employees fairly.

The problem is that the rules do not require that they be treated fairly. That is wrong. And that is why we are sponsoring this legislation.

As BERNIE pointed out a few weeks ago, no member of Congress would want to see the pension system here changed in mid-stream if it meant that after working for 25 years you would find your expected pension cut in half.

Millions of employees across the country don't want to see their hard-earned benefits cut either. But they are afraid. They are looking at their retirement years, after a lifetime of work, and they are afraid that after a cash balance conversion they will lose half of the benefits they expected and worked so hard to achieve. The General Accounting Office has documented that conversions especially hurt older employees and can cost them as much as half of their pension benefits.

These employees are looking at the cost of health insurance, the cost of college for their children, and the cost of retirement. They have counted on their pension to help them through some of those costs. But under a conversion, they risk seeing those benefits and those dreams, cut.

Mr. Speaker, I have been contacted by employees in every industry from across the country, from the airline industry, the finance industry, and industrial companies. They are wondering why in the world would President Bush promote new rules that deliberately give employers the legal protection to slash pension benefits.

The President's proposal raises serious questions about the direction in which he is taking the nation and the people who work so hard every day to make ends meet.

The President does not have a policy to create jobs.

The President does not have a policy to eliminate the budget deficit.

The President does not have a policy to provide health insurance to the uninsured.

But President Bush does have a plan to help companies slash employees' pension benefits.

The business press is full of stories about this problem—retirement security. This isn't something BERNIE SANDERS and RAHM EMANUEL and I have made up. The economic future of Americans is in serious jeopardy and these pension rules are one important part of that problem.

Our legislation will not create jobs, or restore the budget surplus, provide health insurance, or turn around the stock market, although we have proposals to accomplish those goals. Those are not the goals of this particular bill.

But our bill will establish fairness for the treatment of older employees' hard-earned pension benefits. That is what they deserve, what they expect, and what they need.

REGARDING THE UNTIMELY
DEATH OF SERGEANT ORLANDO
MORALES IN AFGHANISTAN ON
MARCH 29, 2003

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today with a saddened heart for the untimely death of a resident in South Florida who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom. On Saturday, March 29, 2003, gunmen on motorcycles ambushed a U.S. military reconnaissance patrol in Southern Afghanistan and killed Sergeant Orlando Morales. I wish to express my deepest condolences to Ms. Maria Roxana Morales and the entire Morales family, and at the same time offer all my support and prayers.

I believe a person's life is not measured by the time spent on this earth, but by what is accomplished while here. With this in mind, Sergeant Morales will always be considered a hero. The ultimate passing of any true hero is a tragedy.

This tragedy only crystallizes the great risk and danger these brave men experience in the name of the people of the United States. All of America mourns the loss of our military men and women, though we cannot feel the depth of the families' pain. We never forget that the peace and prosperity that we enjoy are founded on the ultimate sacrifices made by those who have lost their lives in war throughout our nation's history. They have earned our gratitude and respect.

Because of the very high regard in which I hold all members of the armed services, it is especially disturbing to me when one of these fine young men or women is killed. By any measure, their contributions, in terms of human sacrifice, are immense. As a nation we share the sense of loss that the Morales family is experiencing. Though sorrow runs deep, our pride for Orlando Morales shines brightly.

HONORING JIM AND KATHLEEN
HURCKES

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Jim and Kathleen, "Bonnie", Hurckes, outstanding former residents of the City of Chicago and the greater Southwest side. They will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on Good Friday, April 18, 2003. Their celebration is scheduled for April 13, 2003 at St. Andrew the Apostle in Romeoville, Illinois.

Jim and Bonnie have spent five decades of married life together and have produced a loving and nurturing family consisting of eight children: James (Carol), John, Jeff, Judith (Ron), Joyce, Jerry (Mary Ann), Joseph, and June (Dominic). They are also proud grandparents of their 17 grandchildren: Jay, Jackie, Christine, Rick, Joe, Peggy, Mike, Robert, John, Jeff, Stephanie, Kathleen, Dominic, Nick, Jenna, Mark, and Megan, as well as their first greatgrandchild, Jayton.

Jim and Bonnie have passed fifty years of marriage in loving and consistent devotion to one another, truly exemplifying the spirit of the sacrament of holy matrimony and serving as a model and inspiration to their children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, as Jim and Bonnie continue their wedded journey, I would ask that my colleagues join me in honoring this remarkable couple.

HONORING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY
HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM
AS A RECIPIENT OF THE 2003
COUNTIES CARE FOR KIDS
AWARD

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Fairfax County's Healthy Families program on their recognition by the National Association of Counties as a 2003 Counties Care for Kids Award recipient.

Healthy Families Fairfax was launched in 1992 under the parent organization Healthy Families America, and has now been working to improve childcare in Fairfax for over a decade. This Counties Care for Kids Award recognizes the program as an innovative and model county government effort that has demonstrated measurable outcomes for children and their families. Healthy Families Fairfax works directly with first-time parents to promote child health. A public-health nurse and family support worker provide educational and therapeutic support to the family at home, from prenatal through age four of the child.

Studies have shown the immense impact of early childhood care on child development, but unfortunately many children are neglected and even abused during their pivotal formative years. By assisting parents with parenting, health, nutrition, problem-solving, and stress management, Healthy Families Fairfax gives children and families the opportunity to grow up together in a healthy environment. While similar programs do exist, most do not approach the comprehensive approach of Healthy Families Fairfax, whose support teams not only address parenting issues, but also assist families with family problems not directly related to the new baby. This inclusive method affords homes a viable chance to succeed in raising their baby and building a life together.

This worthy project is a voluntary prevention program of the Department of Family Services, in partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Health, Northern Virginia Family Service, UCM Community Solutions, and Reston Interfaith. Only eight programs nationwide have been chosen as 2003 Counties